

Monument Avenue, 2600 Block
Richmond
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1305

HABS
VA,
44-RICH,
130-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
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Historic American Buildings Survey
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MONUMENT AVENUE, 2600 BLOCK

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Location: 2600 block of Monument Avenue, between Robinson and Mulberry streets,
Richmond, Virginia.

History and Description:

The 2600 block of Monument Avenue, between Robinson Street at the east and Mulberry at the west, is another short block compared to most along Monument Avenue, being just a fraction wider than the block preceding it. The land south of the block was held by John P. Branch until 1912, when he transferred it to his company, the Kingsland Land Corporation, to be subdivided. Individual owners purchased lots with the following covenants: (1) "no part of said land shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of during the next twenty-five years to any person who is a negro or of African descent"; (2) "no apartment or flat house may be erected upon said land"; and (3) no more than one dwelling may be built during the next thirty years, with the exception of a stable or "private garage" with living rooms therein. After the thirty-year period, more than one residence could be built, but they were required to meet certain measurement restrictions specified in the deeds. Branch also owned land on the north side of the street, but he sold lots earlier, without deed restrictions.

As a result, there is a great contrast between the south side and north side of the street. As in certain other blocks, such as the 2300, lots on the southern side are wider than those on the north side. While the south side has sprawling houses which give it a suburban character, the north side is dotted with narrow town houses and reflects a tighter, more compact environment. Because of the deed restrictions, apartments are situated only on the north side and contribute to the impression of high-density housing. Five residences of similar scale present a more unified streetscape on the south side than the combination of three houses and three apartment buildings of varying size on the north. Most of the residences on the south were built about ten years after those on the north. Buildings were erected on the north side beginning in 1910. Construction activities came to a halt around 1916, until the last building on the north side was completed by 1923. Although there was a lone house on the opposite side in 1916, its neighboring residences were not constructed for another decade or so.

The first houses on the block at Nos. 2610, 2608, and 2614 were built from 1909 to 1913 in the Colonial Revival style. The house at No. 2610 (1909) looks like a miniaturized variation of the loftier Colonial Revivals, probably due to its false-mansard and tiled roof, which is a major component of the facade. The full three-story Colonial Revival with pronounced entablature at No. 2608 stylistically links the 2600 block to others on Monument Avenue. Not unlike those at Nos. 1822 and 1826, this house has a tripartite division: there is a columned front porch running the width of the house that gives it a substantial base; a middle section is adorned with a center canted bay and quoins at the ends; and the third story has a wide frieze.

The two-bay-wide Colonial Revival house at No. 2614 is another design of Albert Hunt. Hunt's flair for giving buildings an unprecedented look is expressed in this heightened two-and-a-half-story town house with shallow hipped roof. An ornamented pediment, outlined by moldings,

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rests above a columned porch. Limestone window surrounds are exaggerated at the second story, while vertical limestone bands placed above the second-story cornice rise to meet mutules under the soffit at the roof. A semi-circular oriel with bowed glazing, elliptical fanlight, arched dormer window, and Ionic capitals introduce curved lines to the rather upright building.

This lot changed hands several times before original homeowner J. K. Dunlop, a leaf buyer for the American Tobacco Company Stemmary, acquired it in 1911. Dunlop, who resided at 1717 Park Ave. when he bought the land, changed jobs in 1913 to become a special agent for the Provident Life and Trust Company. The Dunlops sold their home to colleague A. O. Swink, an agent with Atlantic Life Insurance Company, in 1917. The Swink family occupied the home a brief period, since they sold it to James J. Hickey in 1919. Hickey, one of Imperial Tobacco Company's field superintendents, and his wife, Marie, owned the house until 1939.

The remaining lots on the north side occur at the ends of the block at Nos. 2600, 2602-2606, and 2616, which are filled with apartment buildings. There is a nine-year spread between the date of the first apartment, built in 1914, and the last apartment, built in 1923. These three-story, brick buildings with columned porches have few features in common. The apartment building at the northwest corner of Mulberry and Monument (No. 2616), Westover, was the first one erected on the block. It is an occasionally repeated apartment plan and occurs down the street at No. 3039 and in other sections of the Fan District. A central block of three bays is flanked by one-bay wide projecting wings at either side. Multiple vertical and horizontal elements such as a two-level porch, tall paired columns, limestone courses, numerous double-hung windows, cornice, and narrow parapet give this building a grid-like appearance. A central entrance separates two double-decked porches that are eventually joined at the second story by a single flat roof.

E. D. Hobbs and his wife, Edna, residents of Norfolk, were the original owners of Westover. Hobbs, who listed himself as architect on the building permit, purchased a lot that was part of a parcel of land previously owned by John P. Branch, and later, James Cannon, Jr. The Hobbses bought the lot from Henry and Jeannie McLean Wood on March 9, 1914, and applied for their building permit at the end of the month. The apartment building took approximately six months to erect if the final inspection date of September 9, 1914, recorded on the building permit reflected a finished or nearly completed job. The 1915 city directory listed three businessmen tenants: Abram L. Jacobs, a clothier at Jacobs & Levy; Leon L. Strause, who was associated with the tobacco business; and William J. Whitehurst, treasurer of Ford, Whitehurst Manufacturing Company, president of Virginia Mechanics Institute, and vice president of Richmond Bank and Trust Company. The Hobbses owned their income-producing property until 1935.

The two-bay-wide apartment building at No. 2600 with asymmetrical two-story porch and low hipped roof was erected as the second apartment building on this block in 1916. The building at Nos. 2602-06, built 1923, is a court apartment with a deep U-plan. Its extended mass is tightly contained in its lot, but the scale of the duplicated facade gives it a slight town house appearance unlike the other, bulkier apartments on the block.

Based on the first house built on the south side of this block at No. 2625, it seems these lots were originally intended to be wider than those to the north. Although constructed about the

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same time as the houses across the street, No. 2625 is a large Colonial Revival-style house with an outstretched side porch that was designed to take advantage of a spacious lot. Built in 1916, it was a harbinger of how real estate on the south side of the block would develop.

Although the two Tudor Revival-style houses were built at Nos. 2605 and 2607 about a year apart, they are quite different in their presentation. The house at No. 2607, designed by Otis Asbury for Julia Andrews, a teacher at William Fox School, incorporates a small, steeply pitched gable with half-timbering and a little dormer almost washed away by a sweeping slate roof. Contrasting textures and colors are enhanced by a terraced and manicured lawn to demonstrate that a Cotswold cottage can be appropriately dressed for town life.

The more austere house built the previous year at No. 2605 was designed by Duncan Lee for Winifred and Jonathan Bryan. This house uses fewer materials than the neighboring Tudor Revival house: half-timbering, limestone door detailing, and wood shutters are absent. Front and side gables are layered with thick slate shingles that diminish in size from the eave to the ridge. The two-and-a-half-story house, faced with brick in an English-bond pattern, has an asymmetrical arched entrance that is recessed into the principal gable front. Minor gables and interesting fenestration highlight this L-shaped house. This house stands apart from other houses on Monument, not so much for its architecture, but for its wall-like brick fence (made even taller by a row of hedges), that segregates it from the street and its neighbors. The impermeable qualities of this barrier prevent the house from interacting with the public sector of the avenue. A driveway allows pedestrians to catch a glimpse of the entry opening, but the front door is not visible. The streetscape of the block is affected by this fence, giving this house a look all its own.

Real estate magnate Jonathan Bryan purchased the 80' x 146' lot on April 8, 1921, for \$22,400. The building permit of 1923 indicates the estimated cost of construction was \$32,000. The Bryans owned the house until 1927 when it was purchased by Lilla Bryan Pratt, wife of Reverend Frank Pratt, pastor of First Unitarian Church. The Bryans and Pratts occupied the house together, according to directories, but by 1933 Winifred Bryan regained ownership of the house. Winifred Bryan owned the house until 1941, when new owners Elizabeth and George Hester bought it. Zayde R. Dotts, the granddaughter of John Kerr and Buelah Branch, and her husband, Walter, purchased the house for their residence in 1962.

The last two houses built on the block are Nos. 2609 and 2601. Both of them are two-and-a-half-story brick Georgian Revival designs, each having five bays, a central entrance, hipped roofs, and prominent chimneys. Designed by Baskervill and Lambert, the former, built in 1925-26, is more vertical than the latter one, with bays spaced at closer intervals and a pyramidal roof adorned with a golden pineapple finial at the apex.

William L. Bottomley designed the house at No. 2601 for Maude Morgan Cabell, wife of stockbroker Robert Gamble Cabell III (fig. 61). Maude Cabell purchased the 62'-6" x 146' lot in 1921 from the Kingsland Land Corporation for \$16,751.25. She began negotiations with Bottomley the following year and received a permit to build her new house on January 26, 1924.

The 62'-wide parcel, wider than most Monument Avenue lots, enabled Bottomley to design an expansive residence at this location. The house occupies all but 5' of its frontage along

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Monument. It was intentionally designed after Mompesson House, at Salisbury, England, but was constructed of brick in the English bond pattern instead of stone and has two fewer bays. The Cabell house has stone trim, a broken pediment with coat of arms, and a fence with iron grill. Bottomley's design also features carved-brick lintels at the first story. The Cabells were lifetime residents of their home. Sydney and Frances Lewis, founders of the BEST Company, purchased the house from Cabell heirs in 1969.

Sources of Information:

Richmond City Directories.

Richmond Building Permits: 1042 (2610 Monument); 2444 (2614 Monument); 3719, 3769 (2616 Monument); 12410 (2601 Monument); 11329 (2605 Monument); 13802 (2607 Monument); 15391, 16669 (2609 Monument); 3645 (2625 Monument).

Deed Books: **2614 Monument:** 195B/426, 207D/291, 212A/26, 212B/83,84, 213B/95, 245D/86, 246A/189, 245D/86, 261B/381, 415B/244, 684D/33, 725/981; **2616 Monument:** 195B/426, 209B/204, 226D/228, 228A/444, 399D/390, 604A/117, 772/1639, 249/1037; **2601 Monument:** 300B/318, 419C/493, Will Book 76/207, 657B/258; **2605 Monument:** 219C/493, 269D/148, 285C/305, 269D/144, 349B/238, 384D/466, 424B/493, 611B/223, 681D/699; **2607 Monument:** 219C/493, 255A/170, 307D/329, 645B/255, 647C/255, 678C/760, 753/719; **2609 Monument:** 219C/493, 265A/69, 241D/499, 255C/12, 265A,69, 241D,499, 319B/150, 531B/324, 543D/178, 686C/51.

William B. O'Neal and Christopher Weeks, The Work of William Lawrence Bottomley (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985).

Project Information:

This documentation of Monument Avenue was undertaken in summer 1991 by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a division of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C., under the general direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief. The project was sponsored by the Monument Avenue Centennial Committee, Millie Jones and Ceci Amrhein, co-chairpersons, and Sylvia Summers, director of development. Funding was provided by the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation, the City of Richmond, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the Historic Richmond Foundation, the F. M. Kirby Foundation, Inc., and the Robert G. Cabell III and Maude Morgan Cabell Foundation.

HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland directed the project and edited this historical report. Kathy Edwards (University of California at Berkeley) was the field supervisor; Esme Howard (Yale University) and Toni Prawl (University of Missouri) were the team historians. Jonathan C. Spodek, AIA, produced architectural drawings and Jack Boucher took the photographs. The team's work resulted in the publication Monument Avenue, of which the report on this one block forms only a small portion. Researchers are referred to that volume for more information.

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For more information on 2601 Monument Ave., see HABS No. VA-1257.